1,413 points approved for sale of kites, strings

LAHORE: As many as 1,413 sale points for kite, string and related material have been approved so far whereas the process to register the kite flying-related businesses is underway.

According to Lahore city district administration, teams have been mobilised to ensure safe and peaceful three-day Basant, starting from Feb 6. The field monitoring and the registration process have been accelerated to ensure protection of human lives under supervision of the assistant commissioners who are also closely monitoring the manufacturing process of strings and kites. The registration of 870 kites/string material manufacturers has so far been completed. Besides, the registration of 15 kite flying associations and 258 traders has also been approved.

"In the light of the special instructions, only cotton string is allowed to be sold whereas the manufacturing of metallic string material and kites exceeding fixed sizes is strictly prohibited," said Lahore DC Capt (retired) Muhammad Ali Ijaz in a statement on Monday.

According to the code of conduct, the sizes for a '1.5 Tawa Gudda' (width 40 inches, length 34 inches) and a '4.5 Guddi Kite' (width 35 inches, length 30 inches) have been fixed, and manufacturing or flying sizes larger than these will not be permitted at all.

According to the schedule, kite-flying material can only be prepared until Jan 31, while the transportation of equipment will be allowed from Feb 1 to Feb 8. However, bringing equipment from outside the limits of Lahore district has been declared prohibited.

The DC urged motorcyclists to immediately install safety rods to protect their precious lives as citizen safety is the top responsibility of the district administration. He added that district teams were in the field at all times to prevent deadly kite strings and ensure the implementation of standard operating procedures (SOPs). — **Staff Reporter**

Haji Camp vendors given alternative place, court told

LAHORE: The deputy commissioner on Monday told the Lahore High Court that the pushcart vendors of Haji Camp near railway station had been provided with an alternative place.

Earlier, the deputy commissioner appeared before the court in compliance with its order. Justice Raheel Kamran heard petitions filed by Habibullah and other vendors against the government's failure to provide them with alternate facilities despite submission of the required money.

The DC informed the court that pushcart vendors had been allowed to set up their carts at an alternative location. He stated that the railway station area is highly congested. Therefore, he said, permission cannot be granted to set up pushcarts there. Consequently, he said, an alternative place had been provided to the vendors in the Pir Makki area.

The judge disposed of the petitions in light of the statement of the DC. The judge remarked that the pushcart vendors were not educated, so why were administration's decisions issued to them in English.

The judge directed the DC to decide the applications by the pushcart vendors in Urdu and provide them with copies of the decisions. The judge also instructed the DC to decide similar petitions within 15 days. — Staff Reporter

Toll plaza attackers at large

KASUR: Sarai Mughal police are yet to arrest any of the 52 accused who attacked a toll plaza on the Multan Road in Pattoki tehsil on Saturday.

The accused, according to toll post manager Amjad, ransacked the booths, thrashed the staff and snatched cash worth Rs300,000.

He said the outlaws also injured some staff and resorted to aerial firing, hurling threats of dire consequences and abducted an employ, Ahsan, before leaving the crime scene.

Police lodged a case against Sarfraz, Wahab and 50 unidentified people.

Rejecting general perception here as the two groups are political rivals, SHO Amir Aslam said there was no political pressure on police. He said raids were being conducted to arrest the accused.

Kasur DPO Essa Khan Sukhera said it was a case of co-incidence and not an attack on property. — **Correspondent**

FAISALABAD: Masons and labourers are busy in renovation of historic Clock Tower. It is a part of a Rs700m project that started in September last, in which all electricity, gas, and water supply lines around the tower and adjoining eight bazaars will be shifted underground. — Online

Section 144 imposed for Basant days 'to check political, religious agendas'

Kites carrying pictures, party flags will not be allowed

By Mansoor Malik

LAHORE: As Basant festival is drawing closer, the Punjab government is realising different 'perils', including attempts to use the cultural event to further political and religious agendas, and has eventually imposed Section 144 in the Lahore district for 30 days.

The Punjab home department on Monday evening notified imposition of Section 144, prohibiting the purchase and use of the image or picture of any person, holy scripture, religious place, flag of any country and political party on kites, to avoid disruption of public order.

As per sources, the step was taken following reports that workers and supporters of some political parties had been considering the use of party flags, and pictures of party leaders on the kites.

Considering that this could disrupt law and order in Lahore district during Basant days, thegovernment has instructed that "Only plain, uni-coloured or multi-coloured kites (i.e. Gudda or Patang) shall be allowed during kite flying in the district of Lahore from Feb 6 to 8."

The home department order says that the government has allowed kite flying solely for recreation and festivity, but prohibited manufacturing, trade, transport, storage, sale and purchase of kites having pictures of flags and places for 30 days from now onwards.

The Lahore deputy commissioner has completed the process of registration of manufacturers, traders, sellers and kite flying associations, instructing them to prepare, store and sell kites and twine as per the notified protocols.

The government has already notified the Punjab Regulation of Kite Flying Rules 2025, prohibiting flying kites with metallic wire, nylon cord or strings coated with glass or other sharp materials. Besides, the manufacturing, transport, storage and sale of kites and hazardous strings have also been banned.

The violators could face three to five years imprisonment or a fine of up to Rs2 million, while those manufacturing or selling banned materials may be punished with five to seven years in jail and fines up to Rs5m.

The kite flying rules have also notified specifications of permissible kite flying material that states: a 'patang' shall not exceed four-and-a-half 'githi' and 35 inches in width and 30 inches in length. A 'gudda' shall not exceed one-and-a-half 'tawas' and 40 inches in width and 34 inches in length.

The 'Dor' (twine) will be made of cotton, with not more than nine 'taars' (threads), and not less than 28 counts, coated with 'maanja' having 'sheesha' size of 350 mash and above and wound in the shape of a 'pinna' having a specific QR code. Dor wound on a charkhi (spool) is also prohibited.

Rs47bn Ramazan Nigehban Package approved

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab government has approved Rs47 billion Ramazan Nigehban Package to benefit deserving people.

The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to review preparations for Ramazan and various public relief measures.

"Under the package, 4.2 million deserving families will receive Rs10,000 each during the holy month."

The meeting was informed that more than two million beneficiaries would be issued Nigehban Cards, through which cash assistance as well as essential commodities could be purchased. "The cards will also enable beneficiaries to withdraw cash through Bank of Punjab branchless banking agents and ATMs connected to the one-link network."

"To facilitate smooth implementation, 136 card activation centres will be established across the province, while a Ramazan Nigehban Dashboard will be set up for monitoring and verification. Ration card holders will also receive Rs10,000 during Ramazan instead of the existing Rs3,000 monthly assistance," it was told.

The CM directed the authorities concerned to ensure that payments through the Nigehban Card should be made as simple and accessible as possible, including the option of payment for free home delivery services. She also ordered the establishment of stalls by flour mills, poultry, grocery and ghee mill associations at Sasta Ramazan and Sahulat Bazaars.

The meeting approved the establishment of eight 'Nigehban Dastarkhwan – Maryam Kay Mehman' in each tehsil during Ramazan, where up to 2,000 fasting people would be provided with Iftar daily. The commissioners, deputy commissioners and assistant commissioners were directed to personally monitor the initiative, while the Punjab Food Authority will oversee food quality.

It was decided that 65 Sahulat Bazaars would operate in 30 districts, while additional permanent, mobile and temporary Ramazan bazaars would be set up across other districts. A provincial monitoring room equipped with 1,250 cameras would be established to oversee pricing, cleanliness, security and other arrangements at the bazaars.

The chief minister directed officials to take steps to further reduce prices during Ramazan and ordered immediate identification of land for Sahulat Bazaars in 60 tehsils.

She emphasised that no deserving family should feel alone during the holy month and urged affluent citizens to support those in need.

Eight arrested for smuggling 20,000 kites, chemical string

GUJRAT/OKARA: Gujranwala police on Monday claimed to have unearthed an interprovincial network allegedly involved in online sale of unregistered kites and arrested eight suspects, seizing 20,000 kites, chemical string and related material, being smuggled from Peshawar to Lahore for the upcoming Basant festival.

According to the police, the action was taken on a tip-off by Satellite Town police circle.

A spokesman for Gujranwala police says that the police got a tip-off about the transportation of unregistered kites, metal strings and other material in a passenger bus.

The police stopped a Lahore-bound bus coming from Peshawar and during checking recovered 20,000 unregistered kites, 1,800 rolls of chemical string and other material. The spokesman says that the suspects would take online orders for kites and string through social media platforms and deliver the consignments to different areas of Punjab. The Gujranwala police, he said, registered separate cases against the eight arrested suspects.

Meanwhile, Gujrat police also claimed to have arrested five suspects allegedly involved in the sale of kites and strings and also recovered Basant-related material from them.

Sub Inspector Waqas Ahmed of Gujrat police says that four suspects have been arrested by the Civil Lines police led by Station House Officer (SHO) Inspector Furqan Shahzad Cheema, whereas one of the suspects was arrested by Sara-i-Alamgir police. He added that the district police have stepped up the efforts to trace and arrest the suspects involved in the illegal trade, which had been banned by the Punjab government.

OKARA: Two kite sellers were arrested by Okara Saddar police in as many raids.

The police claimed to have arrested a suspect, Shahid Nadeem, and recovered 175 kites, 20 string rolls and sale cash from him.

In another raid, Hujra Shah Muqeem police arrested a kite seller, Ali, and recovered 25 kites.

Separate cases were registered against the suspects under The Prohibition of Kite Flying Ordinance. — **Dawn Report**

Kidnapped boy murdered as parents fail to pay ransom

TOBA TEK SINGH: A nine-year-old boy, who was kidnapped five days ago at Gojra, was found murdered by his kidnappers, after his parents failed to pay the ransom to them.

According to police, Abubakar (9), son of Mujahid, a resident of Chak 339-JB, Kajlay, was kidnapped when he was playing outside his house.

The boy's parents later received mobile phone calls from the kidnappers, who demanded Rs3 million for his release. However, the parents could not pay the ransom and they reported the matter to the Nawan Lahore police, which registered a case and started an investigation.

During the investigation, the police detained a suspect, Zulqarnain Raza, of the same village, who confessed to have kidnapped the boy, along with his accomplices, for ransom.

However, the suspect told the police that they killed the boy after his parents failed to pay ransom, and dumped the body in a drain.

On Monday, the police recovered the boy's body on the suspect's identification and also arrested his accomplices from their hideouts.

The child's body was shifted to the Nawan Lahore Rural Health Centre, where the postmortem examination was conducted. Later, the body was handed over to the boy's bereaved family.

PFA ACTION: A Punjab Food Authority (PFA) team recovered 200kg substandard beef from a loader motorcycle-rickshaw at Gojra on Monday.

Officials say that a PFA team, headed by Assistant Food Safety Officer Ghulam Muhayuddin was checking vehicles on Toba Road at Gojra when they stopped a loader rickshaw.

The team recovered 200kg beef from the rickshaw, that was declared substandard by the veterinary officer. — **Correspondent**

'Rules ignored' to retain Pindi RPO post for officer joining course

The officers opting for the course mandatory for promotion have to leave their posts

By Asif Chaudhry

LAHORE: The Punjab government has reportedly 'retained' the post of Rawalpindi regional police officer (RPO) for a period of five months or so for Babar Sarfraz Alpa, the officer holding the position, even after he joined the 124th National Management Course (NMC) scheduled at the National School of Public Policy, Lahore, from Jan 5 to May 8, 2026.

As per reports, Mr Apla had expressed his desire to the relevant authorities to retain the post of Rawalpindi RPO while he was attending the NMC, a favour rarely extended to a civil servant holding a senior field position in Punjab.

An officer privy to the development says that over 40 BS-20 officers from various services, including the the Police Service of Pakistan (PSP) and the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS), were nominated for the NMC from all over the country.

Using it as precedent, some other officers also made efforts and used their connections to get the immunity granted to the Rawalpindi RPO by the Punjab government. However, their hopes dashed when they were directed to quit their present posts, observe the civil service rules which prescribe disciplinary proceedings against those violating the mandatory procedures. Similarly, 118 BS-19 officers from different services were nominated from across the country to attend the Senior Management Course (SMC).

In an official letter, the Establishment Division (ED), Islamabad, stated that the nominated officers were required to report to the concerned offices of the National Institute of Public Administration(NIPA) in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi and Peshawar, by January 16, 2026.

From Punjab, some officers serving as district police officers (DPOs) were relieved of their respective charges before proceeding for the SMC. They included Sialkot DPO Faisal Shahzad, Toba Tek Singh DPO Abadat Nisar and Multan Chief Traffic Officer Kashif Aslam.

Sharing more details, the official said that while Mr Alpa is regularly attending the NMC in Lahore, the relevant authorities assigned the look-after charge of the Rawalpindi RPO office to City Police Officer (CPO) Khalid Mahmood Hamdani, a BS-19 officer, as a stopgap arrangement.

Some police officers are of the view that an officer, who is physically present in a city some 300 kilometres away from his posting station can't justify his position as the Rawalpindi region is considered "highly sensitive" due to its proximity to the federal capital. Besides, the region is also managing Attock, a district bordering Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Establishment Division communicated to the provincial governments and other relevant authorities the elaborate rules and the prime minister's directive, to be followed strictly by the officers joining promotion courses.

"As per the prime minister's directive, issued vide this division's letter, all ministries/divisions/ departments are bound to relieve the officers on their selection for training course without fail," reads the ED letter.

It says that the ministries, divisions and departments concerned shall make stopgap arrangements, as the nominated officers were not required to attend their offices while undergoing the training.

"Non-compliance of the directions of the prime minister can attract disciplinary proceedings under the Government Servants (E&D) Rules, 2020," the letter warns.

The official source says that the government has violated the above-mentioned rules and the PM's directive to the extent of the Rawalpindi RPO, terming it a case of a selective approach to accommodate a police officer.

Dawn texted a message to Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari to get the government's version on the issue and waited for three days for her response, which hasnot been received yet.